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Message Text

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11
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 AID-05 /094 W
---------- 019513
R 141338Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5775
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3374

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, UR, KU
SUBJ: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CONFIRMS KUWAIT PURCHASES OF SOVIET ARMS

1. IN CONVERSATION ON OTHER MATTERS REPORT SEPTELS, DEPPRIMIN SHAIKH JABER AL-ALI CONFIRMED TO ME THAT KUWAIT HAD AGREED TO PURCHASE SOVIET WEAPONS WORTH $300 MILLION. HE WAS SOMEWHAT VAGUE AS TO SPECIFIC ITEMS, BUT INDICATED THESE INCLUDED MISSILES HAVING 200 KM RANGE (PROBABLY SCUD) AND 70 KM RANGE (PROBABLY FROG). HE DID NOT COMMENT ON ANY OTHER ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT THAT MIGHT ALSO BE INCLUDED. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, JABER ADMITTED THEY WOULD HAVE TO TAKE SOME SOVIET ADVISORS, BUT SAID THAT THESE WOULD BE KEPT TO MINIMUM. BULK OF ADVISORS NEEDED TO TRAIN KUWAITI ARMED FORCES IS USE OF THESE WEAPONDS WOULD BE DRAWN FROM EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN MILITARY.
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2. DEPPRIMIN STATED THAT DECISION TO PURCHASE SOVIET WEAPONS
WAS BASED MORE ON POLITICAL NEED TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF
ARM SUPPLIES RATHER THEN DESIRE TO OBTAIN SOVIET WEAPONS PER SE.
HE INSISTED THAT KUWAIT ARMED FORCES WOULD CONTINUE TO RELY ON
US AND UK FOR SUPPLY OF MAJOR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT AND FOR MILITARY
TRAINING, SINCE GOK PLACED ITS TRUST IN THOSE COUNTRIES WITH
RESPECT TO PROBLEMS INVOLVING ITS DEFENSE. HE NOTED THAT SOME
WEAPONS WERE ALSO BEING PURCHASED FROM YUGOSLAVIA AND, OF COURSE,
MILITARY EQUIPMENT HAD ALSO BEEN OBTAINED FROM FRANCE. HE STRESSED
THAT THIS DIVERSIFICATION OF SUPPLIERS WAS POLITICAL NECESSITY,
SO THAT GOK COULD COUNTER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CRITICISM THAT KUWAIT
WAS TYING ITSELF TOO CLOSELY TO AMERICANS AND BRITISH.

3. JABER AL-ALI ALSO POINTED OUT THAT FACT KUWAIT WAS PURCHASING
MISSILES FROM SOVIET UNION, WHICH WAS ALSO MAJOR ARMS SUPPLIER
FOR IRAQ, WOULD HELP BLUNT ANY IRAQI CRITICISM STEMMING FROM
FACT THAT THESE MISSILES WOULD BE AIMED AT IRAQ ITSELF AS ONLY
COUNTRY IN GULF AREA WHICH POSES MAJOR THREAT TO KUWAIT.
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